

St. Louis, Missouri

Vashon/JeffVanderLou Existing Conditions Report

Prepared by URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES

Prepared for
Danforth Foundation
McCormack Baron & Associates
JeffVanderLou Neighborhood
February 2000

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Acknowledgements

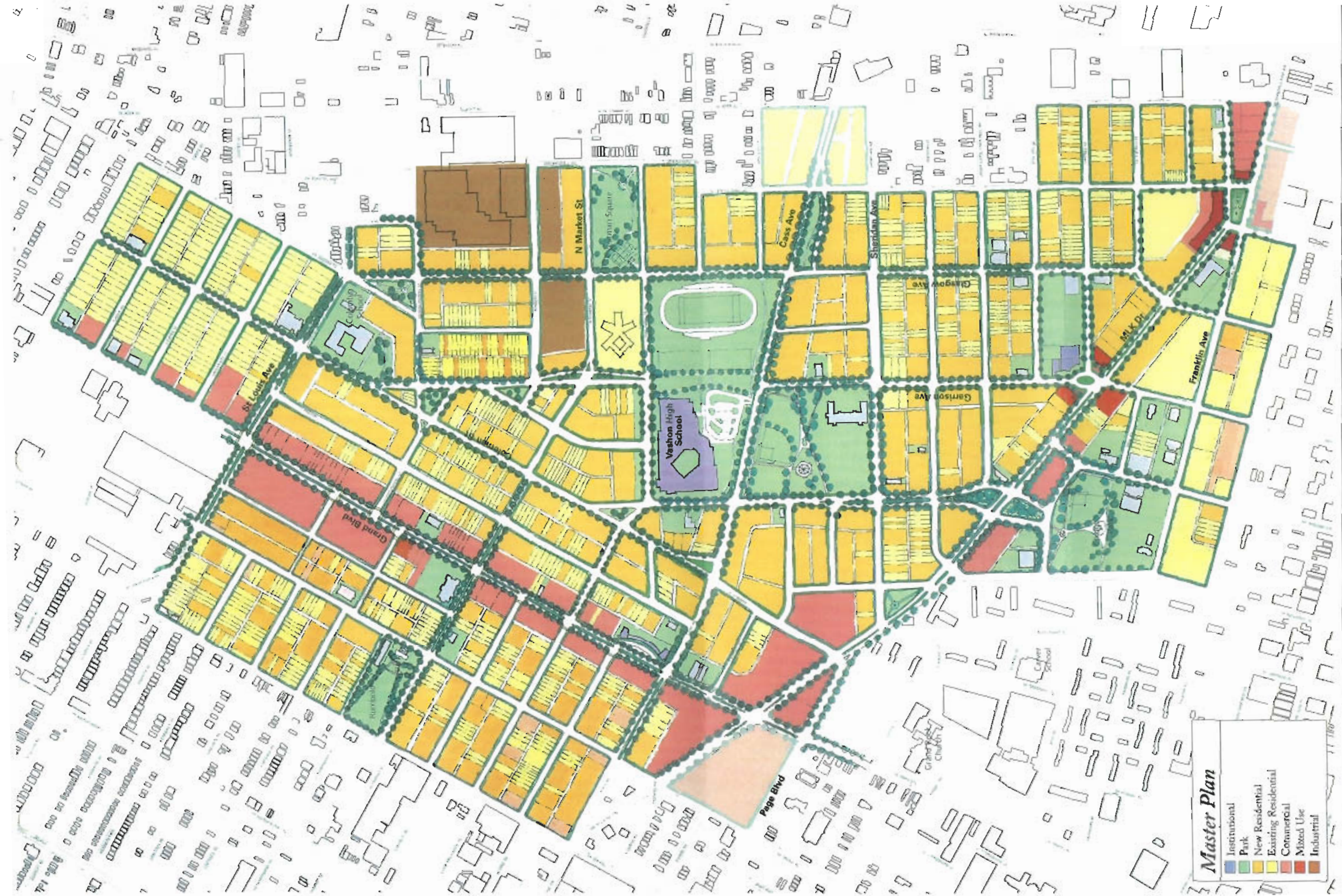
**Prepared for the JeffVanderLou
Neighborhood**

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Master Plan

- Institutional
- Park
- New Residential
- Existing Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Industrial

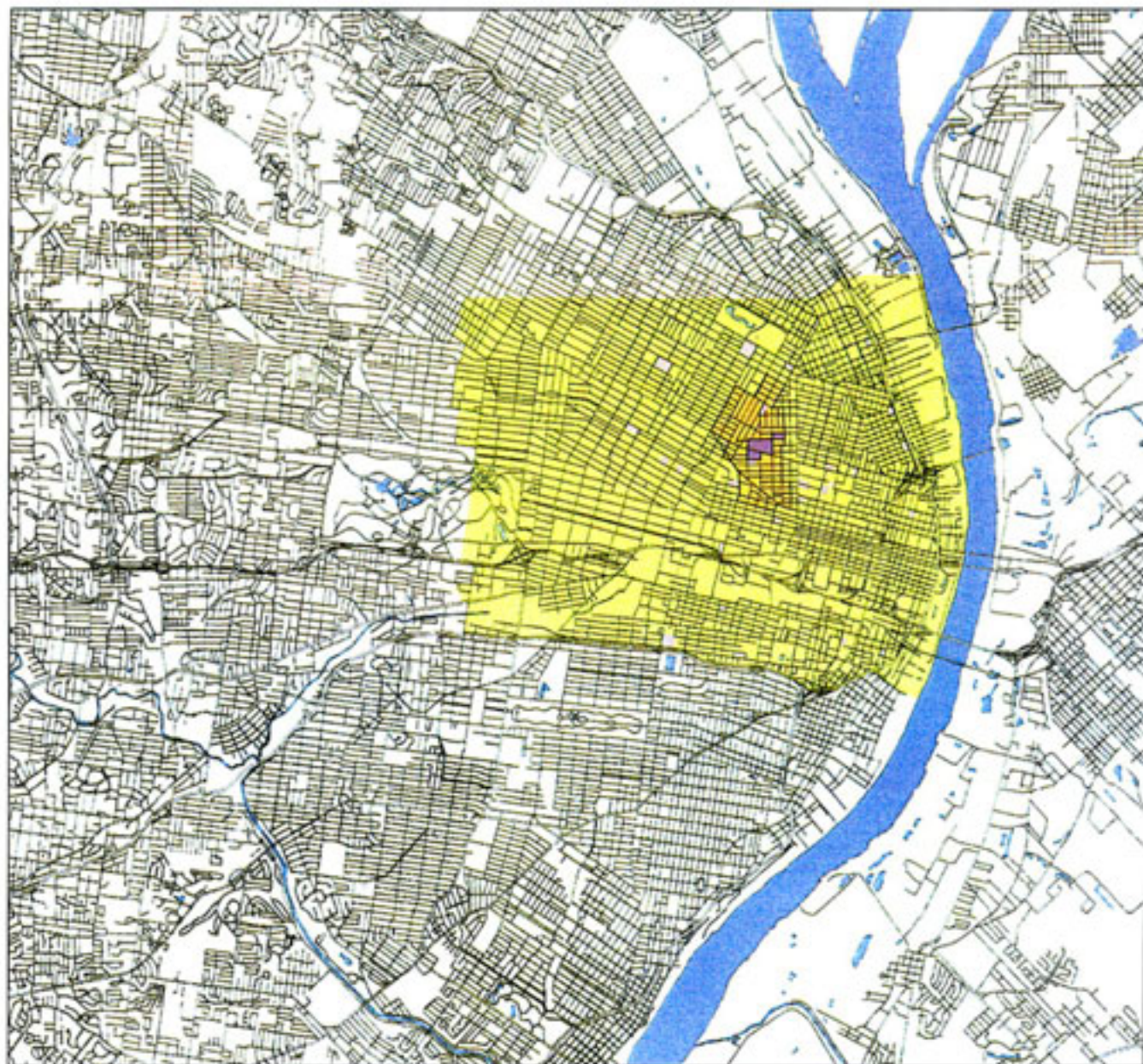
Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative

St. Louis, Missouri

URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES
David Mason & Associates

October 2000

City-Wide Scale

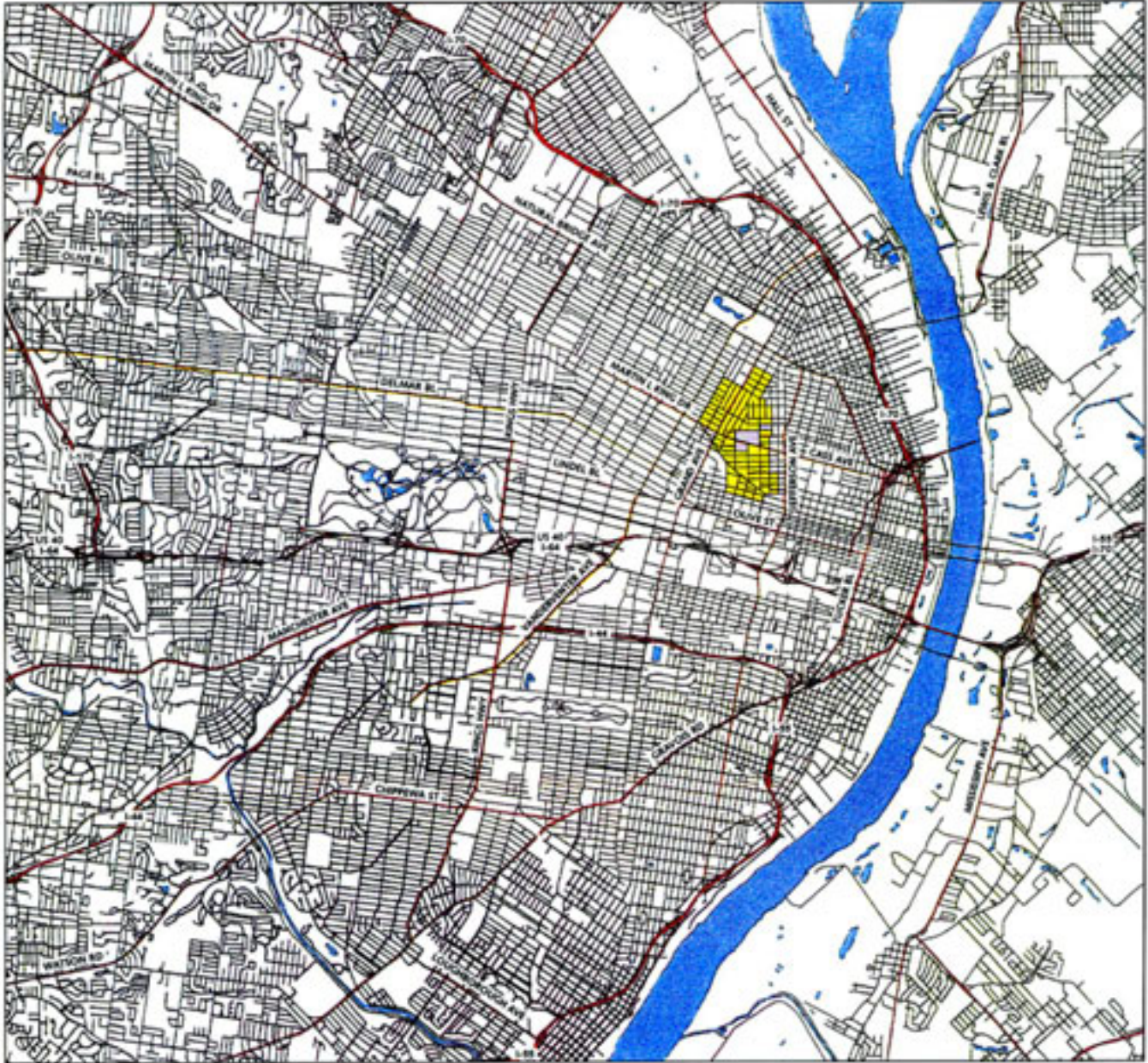


Study Areas

The Vashon/JeffVanderLou study area is a 450-acre neighborhood in North St. Louis. This diagram illustrates the three scales at which the existing conditions were studied and locates the site within its neighborhood and the rest of the city.

Key





- North St. Louis Study Area
- North St. Louis Schools
- JeffVanderLou Study Area
- Vashon High School Site

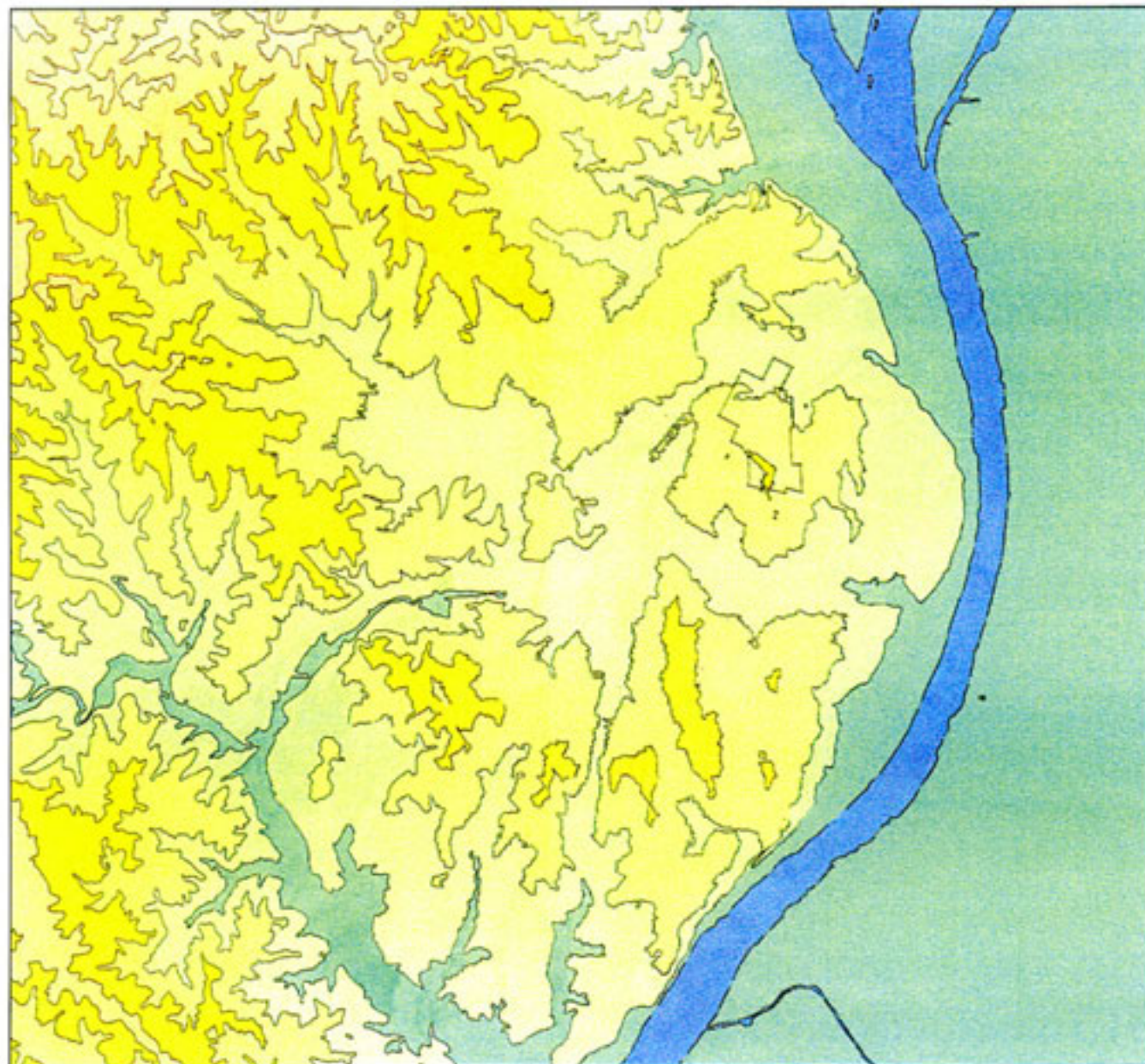


Highways and Arterials X-Ray

The JeffVanderLou study area is located in the center of an area that is bounded by major expressways but does not have direct access to them. The major arterials servicing the neighborhood are Grand Avenue, Cass Avenue, Jefferson Avenue, and Vanderventer Avenue.

Key

-  Highways
-  Arterials
-  JeffVanderLou Study Area
-  Vashon High School Site

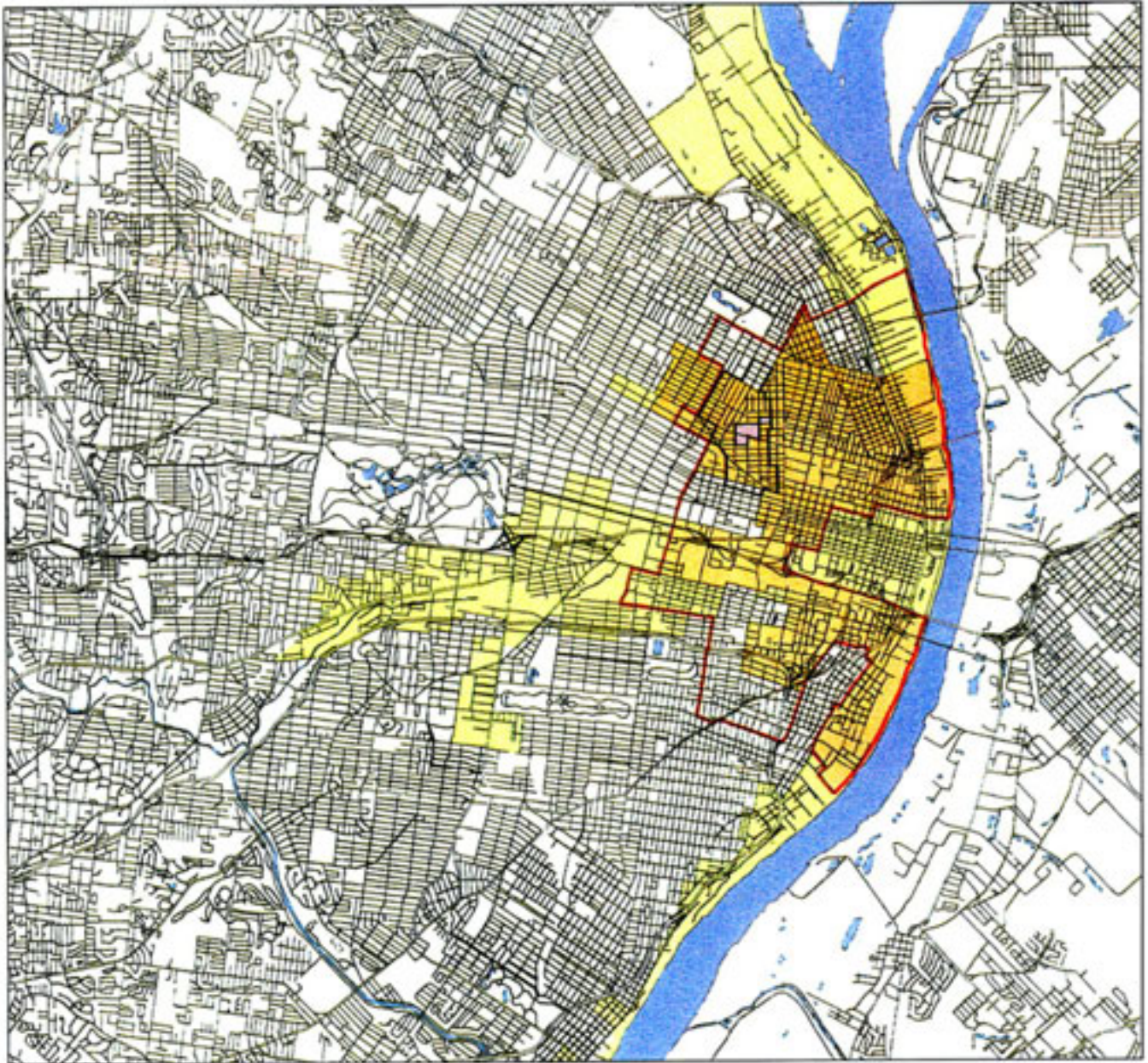


Topography X-Ray

The Topography X-Ray depicts the natural context of the city of St. Louis, including the Mississippi River valley to the East. The study area is located at a local high point, removed from the Mississippi River and stream beds.

Key

	400-450 Feet
	450-500 Feet
	500-550 Feet
	550-600 Feet
	600-650 Feet
	650-700 Feet

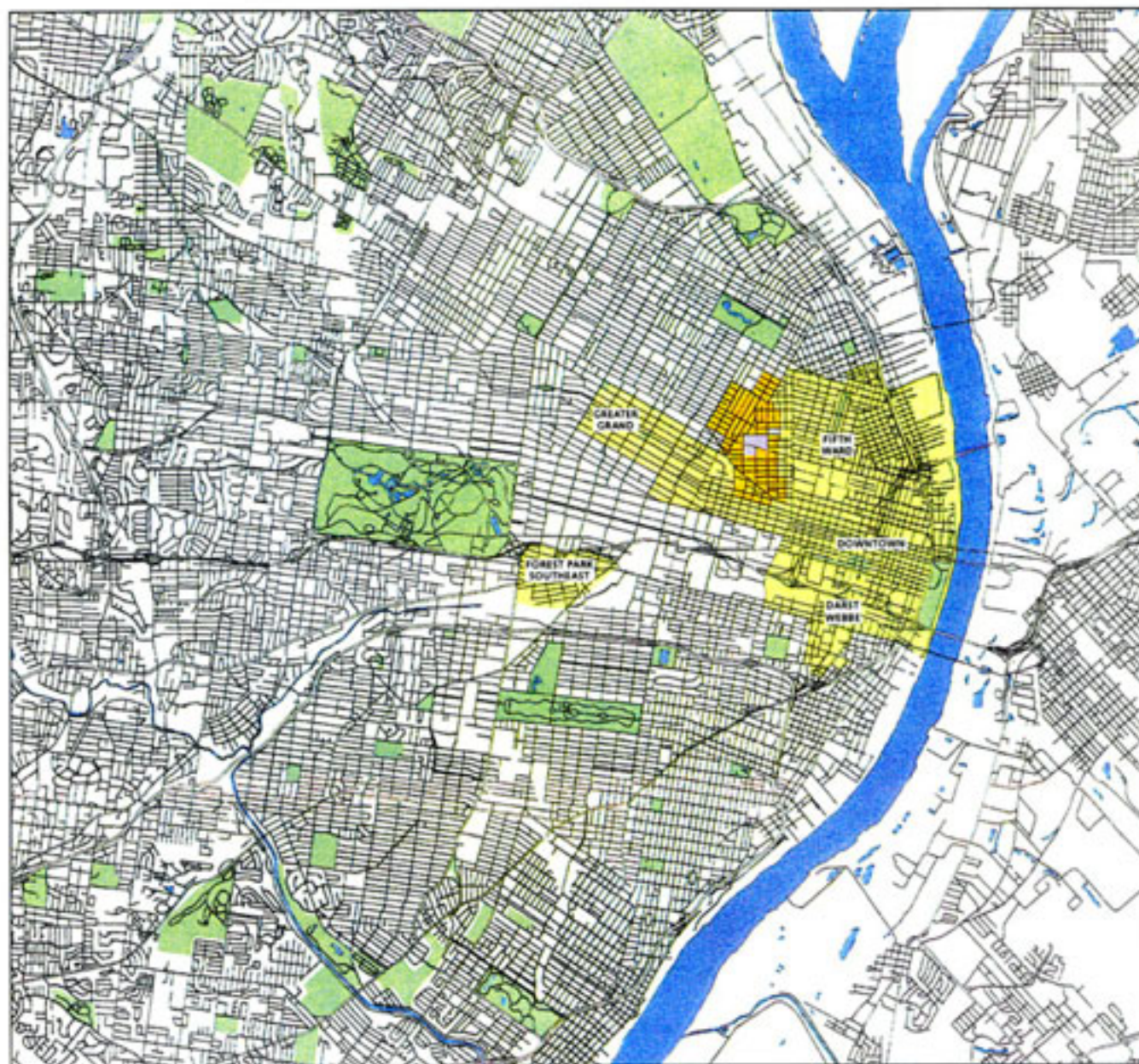


Empowerment and Enterprise Zones

The JeffVanderLou neighborhood is located in an area with many opportunities for various state and federal funding for redevelopment and social programs. The JeffVanderLou study area falls completely within an Enterprise Community and mostly, with the exception of some blocks in the northern and southern ends, in an Empowerment Zone. The presence of these zones indicates areas in distress, but in possession of necessary funding for redevelopment opportunities.

Key

- Empowerment Zone
- Enterprise Zone
- Enterprise Community
- Vashon High School Site



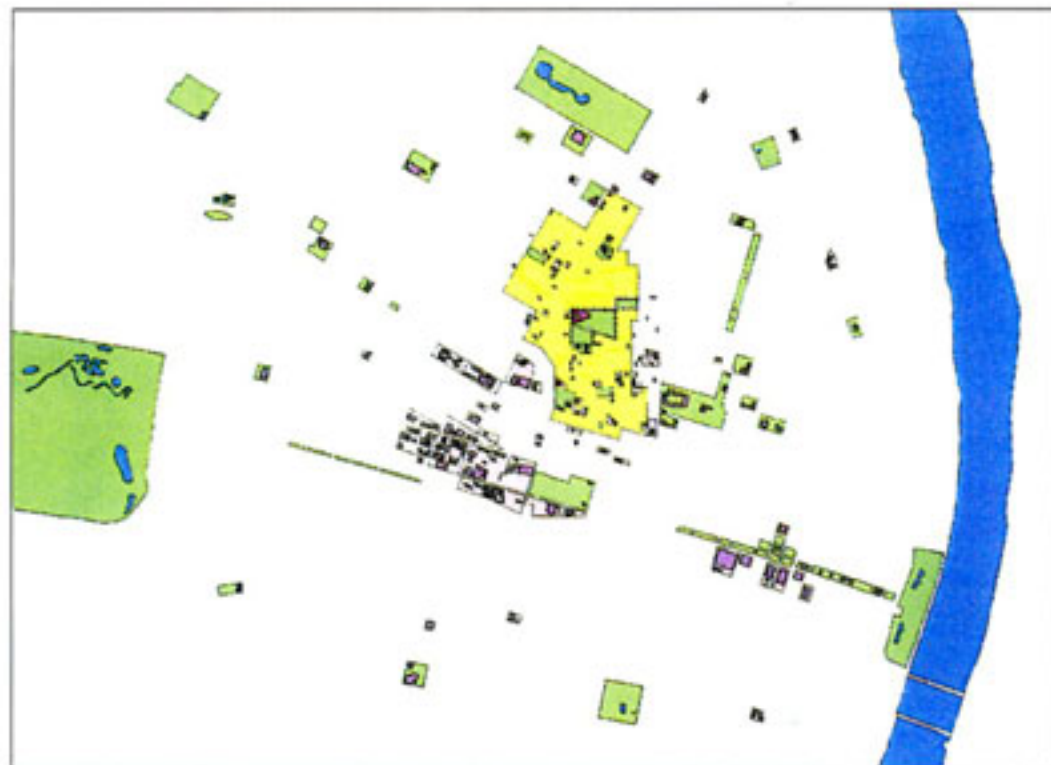
Planning Efforts

Highlighting the area's planning efforts in the context of the city's public parks illustrates a lack of park spaces within the planning areas. JeffVanderLou holds a key position amongst the efforts as an opportunity for cooperation across ward boundaries. Nearby planning efforts include: the Downtown Plan, Fifth Ward Plan, Greater Grand Central, Forest Park Southeast, and Darst Webb Hope VI Revitalization.

Key

- Public Parks
- Other Planning Efforts
- JeffVanderLou Study Area
- Vashon High School Site

North St. Louis Scale



Institutions, Parks, and Open Space X-Ray

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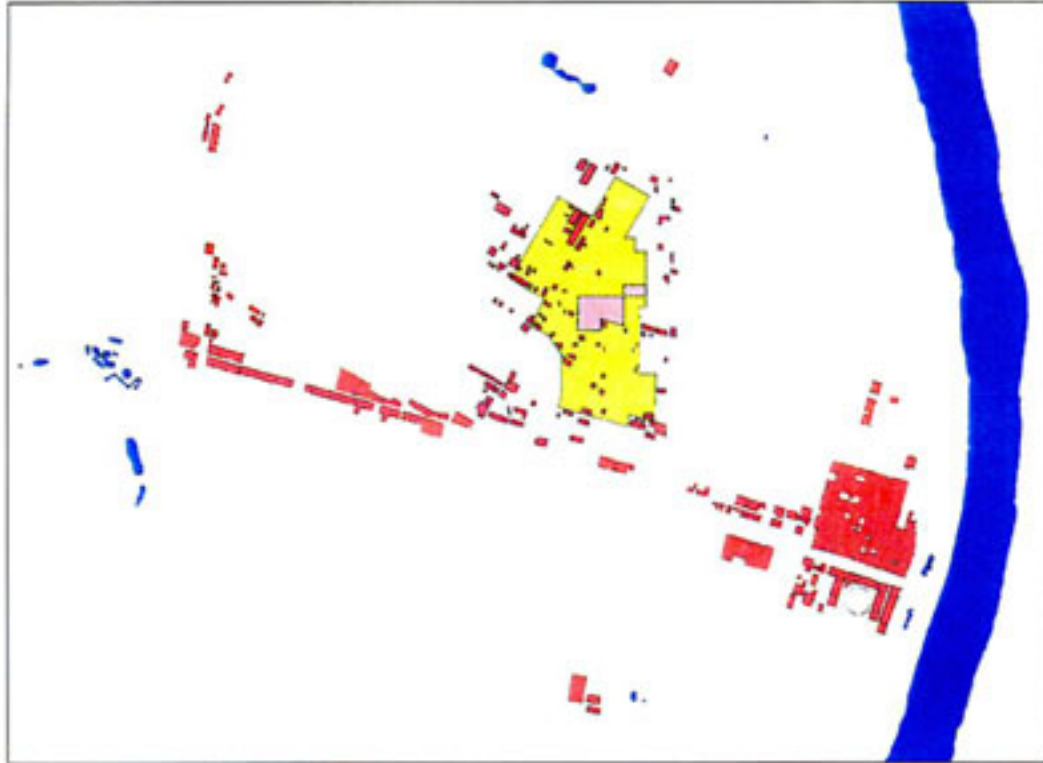
St. Louis's civic functions are concentrated along Market Street from the Gateway Arch through downtown and westward. With the exception of St. Louis University just south of the JeffVanderLou study area, the remainder of the area's institutional uses are scattered and disconnected. The new Vashon High School will add a civic presence to the JeffVanderLou study area.

Open space is dominated by Forest Park and Fairground Park, along with some smaller parks in residential neighborhoods. Very little green space is associated with the area's civic buildings.



Residential X-Ray

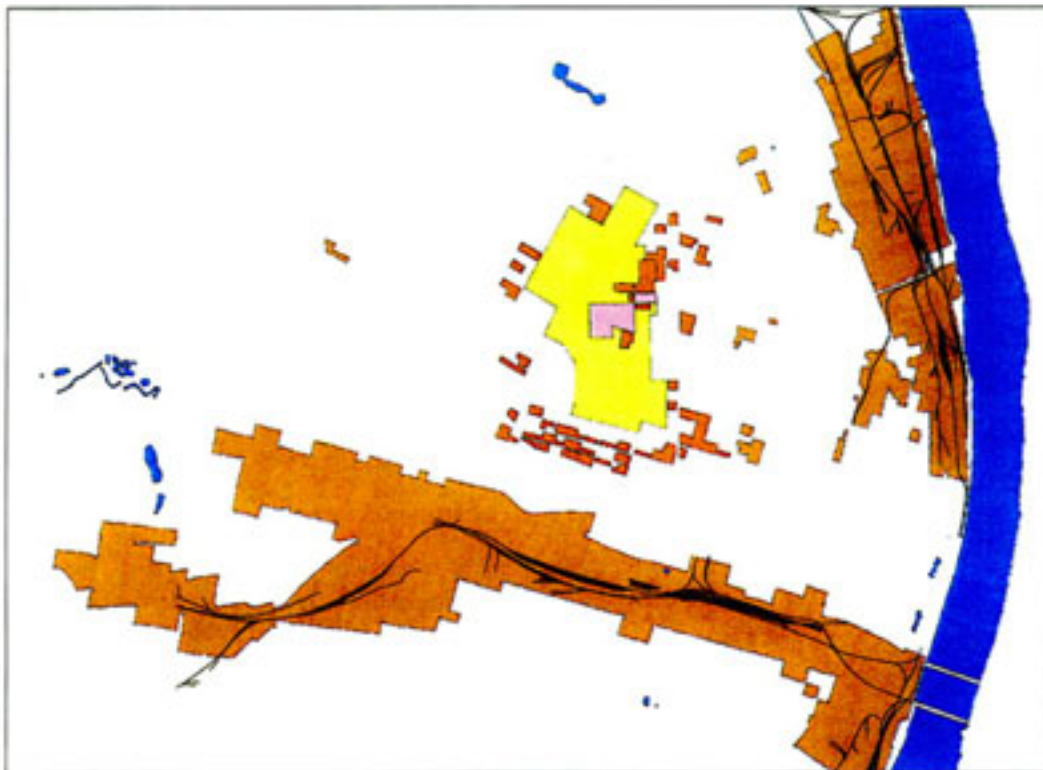
The strongest residential neighborhoods of St. Louis are concentrated in the north and northwestern parts of the city. The residential fabric is tattered within the study area and to the immediate east and west, where vacant lots dominate the residential neighborhoods. The fabric within the site is divided by Grand Boulevard, by Martin Luther King Drive, and by the Vashon High School site.



Commercial X-Ray

Commercial development is located primarily downtown (between the Mississippi River and Tucker Boulevard), west along Olive Street/Lindel Boulevard, and north along Kings Highway into the residential neighborhoods. Commercial uses within the JeffVanderLou study area are scattered, mostly along Martin Luther King Drive and Grand Avenue, but lacking overall.

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Industry and Rail X-Ray

St. Louis's industrial development is concentrated on the rail lines that run along the Mississippi riverfront and extend westward into the city along the old Mill Pond stream bed. Industrial uses are also scattered throughout the northeastern quadrant of the city into the JeffVanderLou neighborhood.

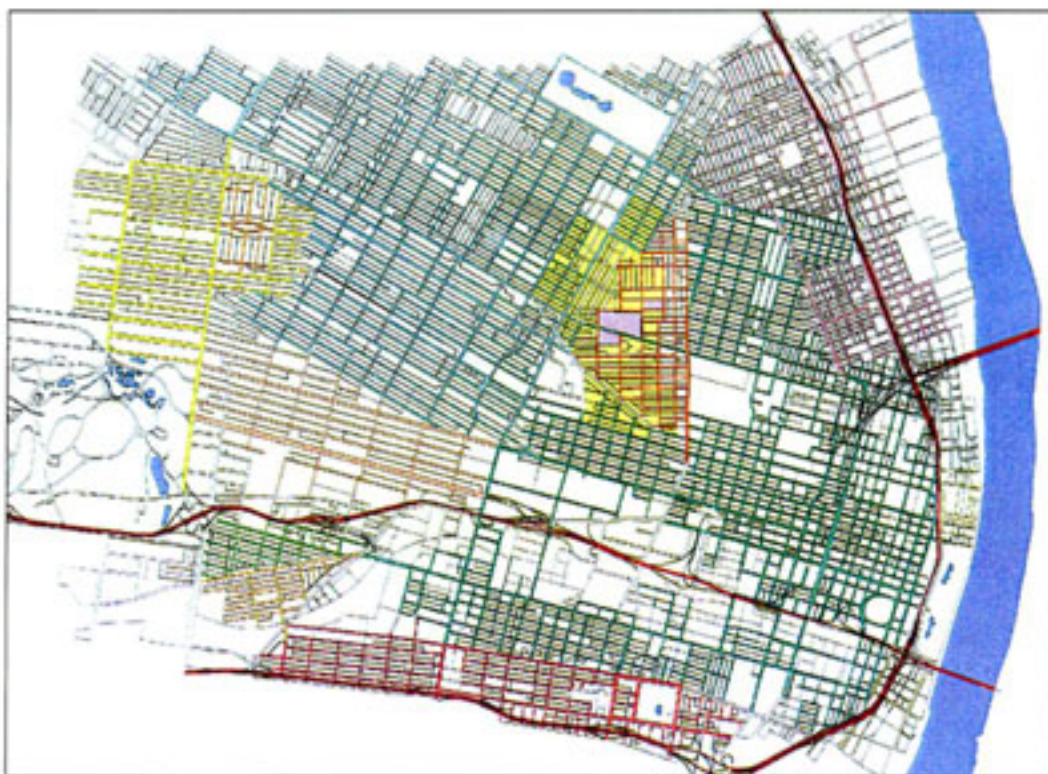
The beltways of industrial development and rail lines clearly separate the city from the waterfront and divide northern St. Louis from the southern neighborhoods.



Streets X-Ray

The streets X-Ray shows the major highways running north-south along the waterfront and east-west through the city, largely along the industrial corridors of the city. A typical alley-loaded block pattern is evident throughout most of the city, although the depth and orientation of the blocks vary significantly. The JeffVanderLou study area is wedged in between two superblocks, and demonstrates the most irregularity in street patterns of the North St. Louis area.

11



Street Grids X-Ray

St. Louis' street network is made up of a several different grids, responding to St. Louis' historical farm platting and the form of the Mississippi River. The JeffVanderLou study area lies where many of the various grid orientations collide, resulting in a confusing network of streets. Neither Martin Luther King Drive nor Cass Avenue correspond to grids within the study area and consequently serve as dividing lines and barriers.

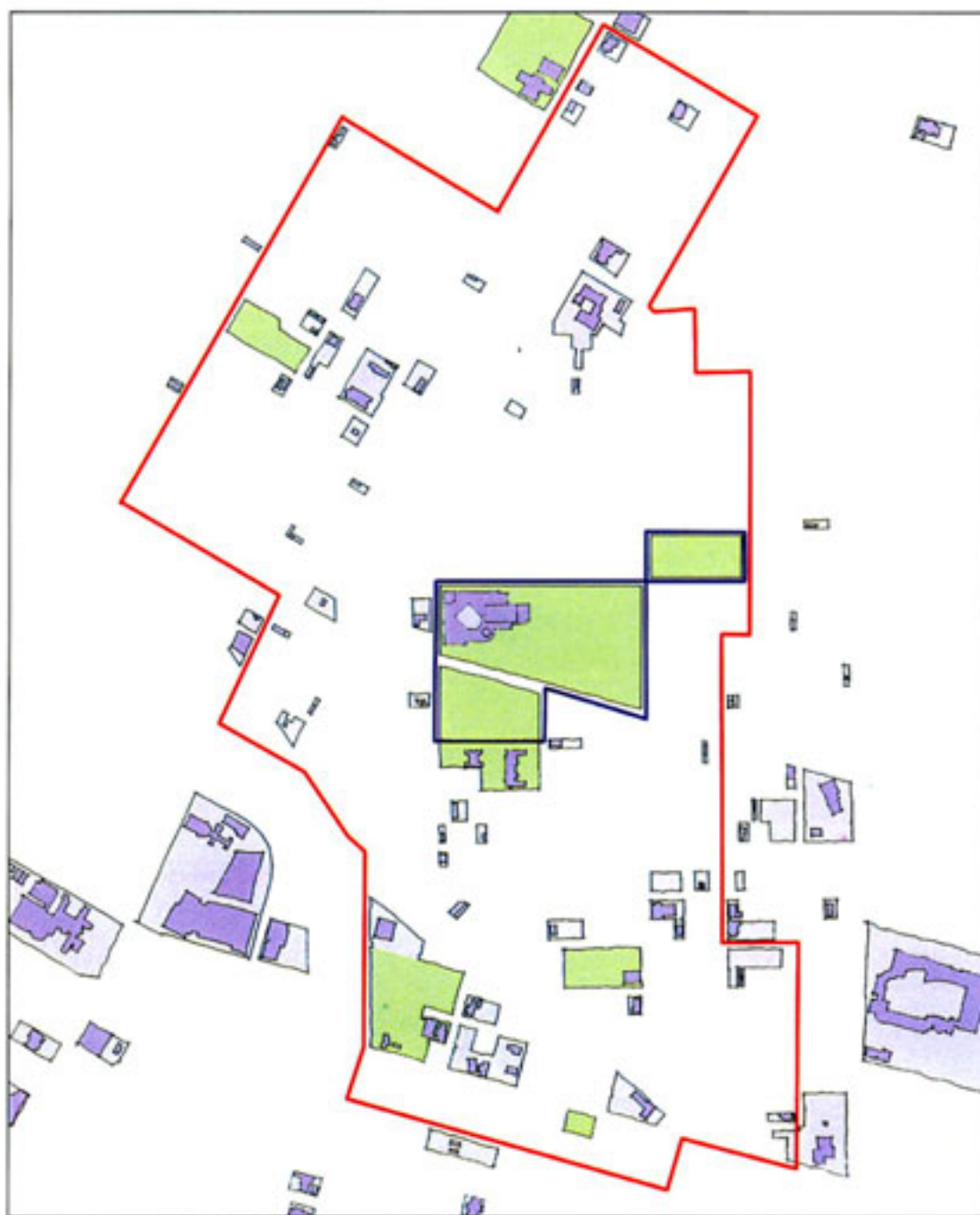


Building Patterns (Figure/Ground) X-Ray

12

Large commercial and industrial building footprints dominate the waterfront, downtown, and the industrial corridor. The erosion of the more dense, small-scale residential fabric is evident at and around the study area. The study area itself also contains a mix of small and large scale footprints.

JeffVanderLou Study Area Scale

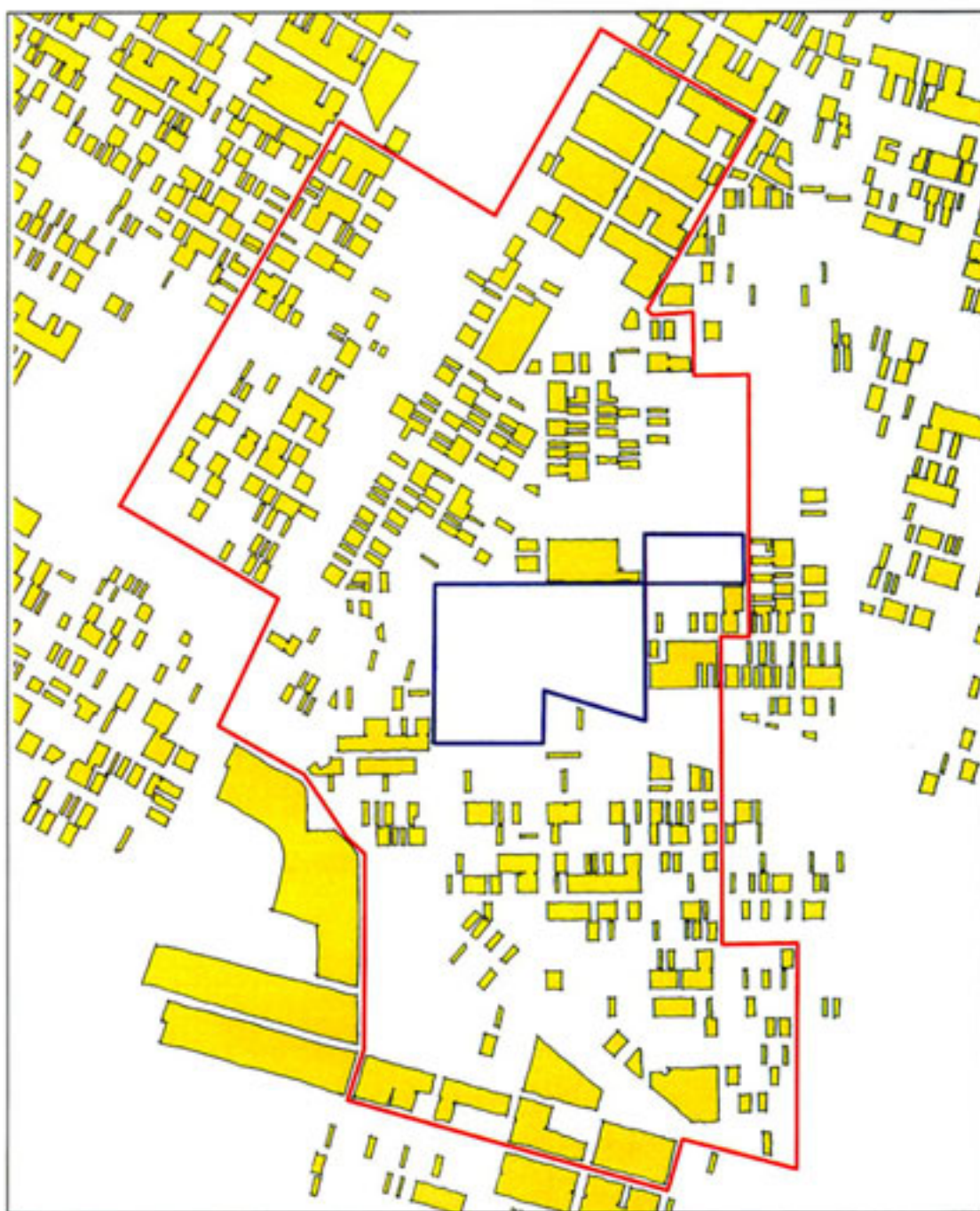


Institutions, Parks, and Open Space X-Ray

The JeffVanderLou neighborhood has an abundance of institutions, most of which are churches. The neighborhood lacks accessible public park space especially before the addition of the new Vasbon High School site. Neighborhood parks are limited to Norman Seay Park and Jordan W. Chambers Park in the south and Rumbold Park in the west. Both Yaetman Square and Garrison-Brantner-Webster Park will be incorporated into the Vasbon High School site.

Key

- Institutional Buildings
- Institutional Properties
- Parks
- JeffVanderLou Study Area
- Vasbon High School Site

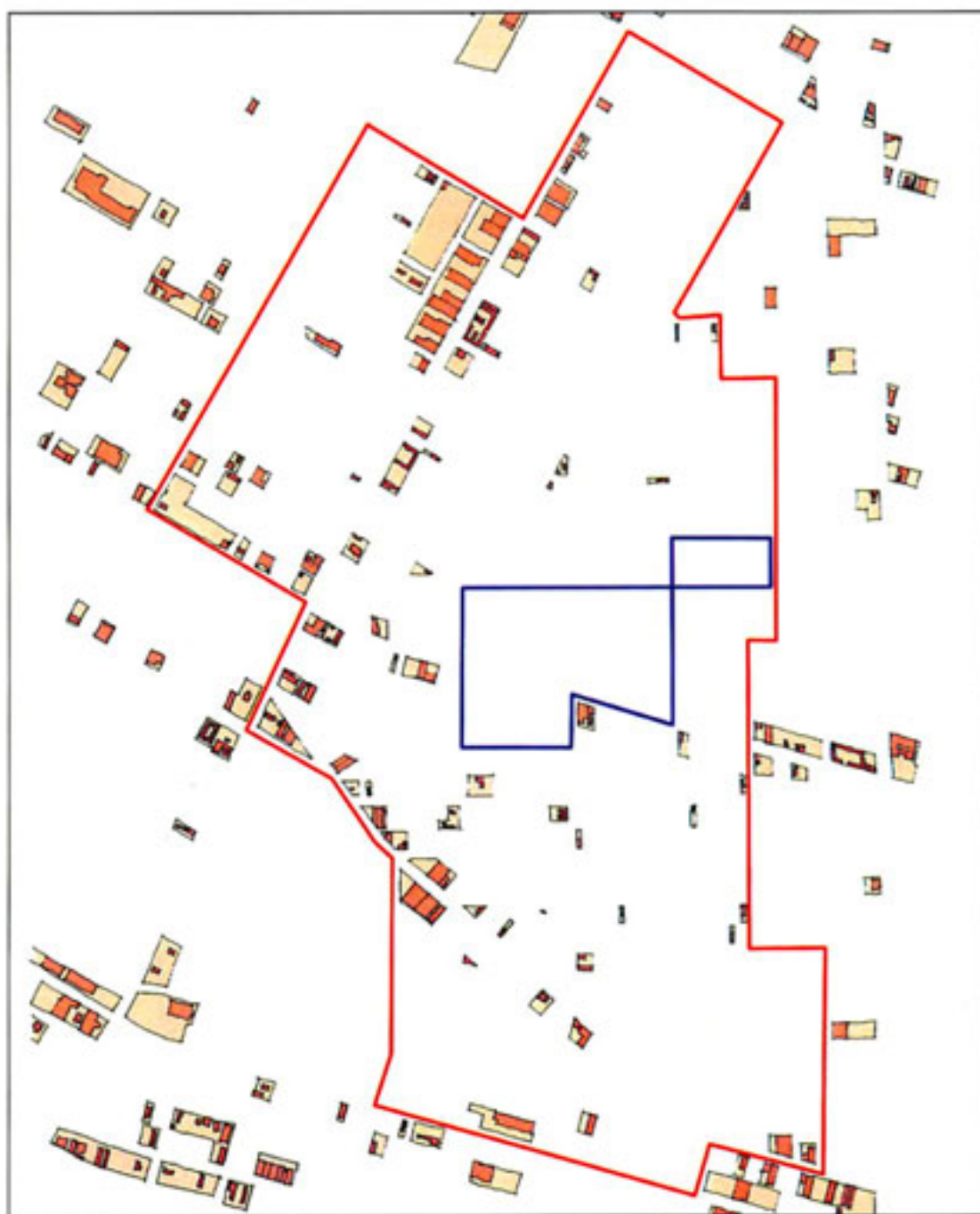


Residential X-Ray

The Residential X-Ray of the JeffVanderLou neighborhood shows some stable residential areas to the north and northwest. The residential fabric within the site south of St. Louis Avenue is tattered. The large sites of public and institutional housing to the south and southwest are misleading because the building density is lower than in the neighborhood's more stable residential areas.

Key

- Residential Properties
- JeffVanderLou Study Area
- Vashon High School Site

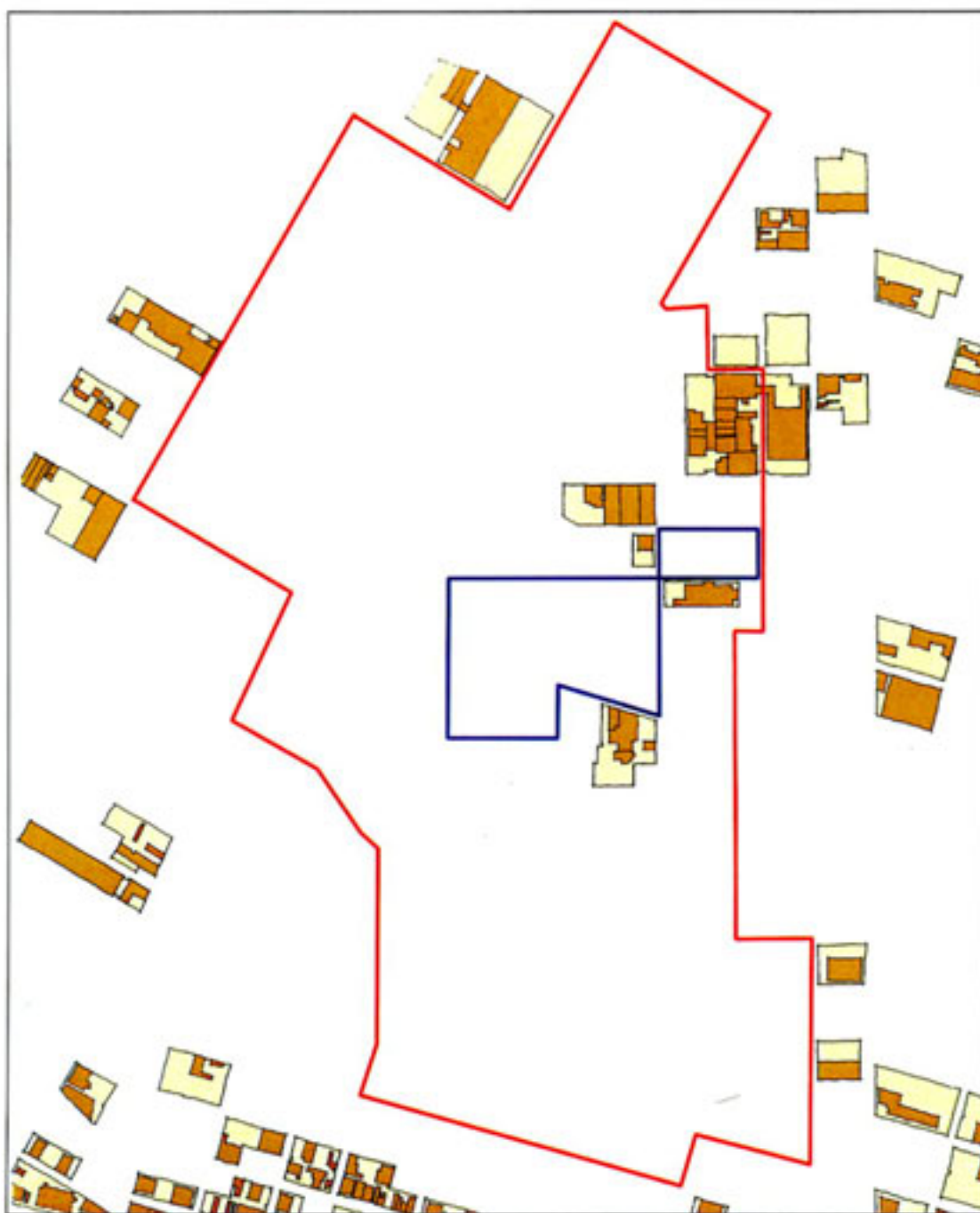


Commercial X-Ray

Commercial uses are scattered throughout the JeffVanderLou neighborhood with a concentration along Grand Boulevard and Dr. Martin Luther King Drive, the area's historic commercial corridors. Many of the commercial businesses are nuisance properties like liquor stores and junk yards.

Key

- Commercial Buildings
- Commercial Properties
- JeffVanderLou Study Area
- Vashon High School Site

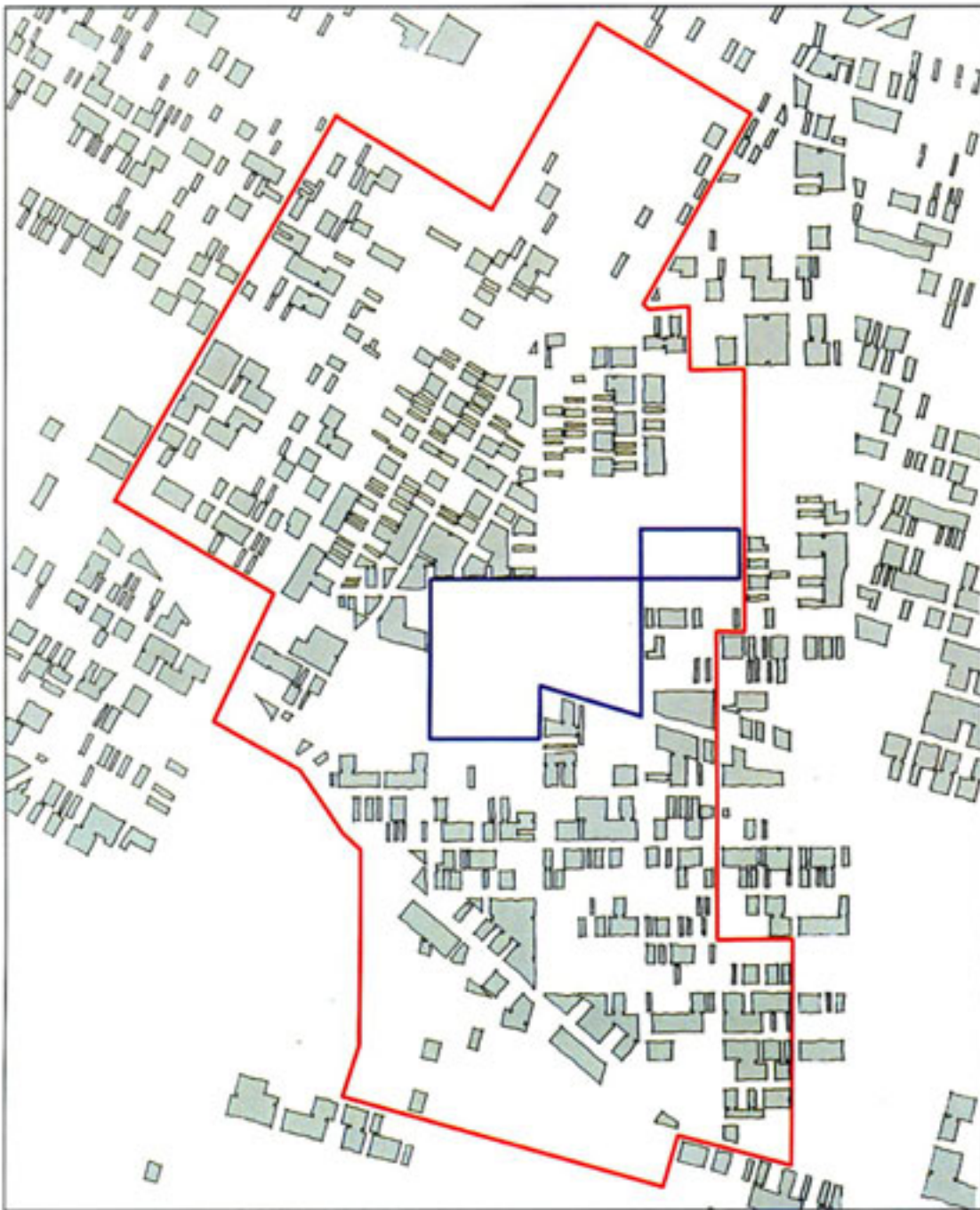


Industrial X-Ray

A surprisingly large amount of industrial activity can be found within and around the study area. An industrial corridor is evident to the south of the study area, and one seems to be emerging between the study area and Jefferson Avenue to the east.

Key

- Industrial Buildings
- Industrial Properties
- JeffVanderLou Study Area
- Vashon High School Site

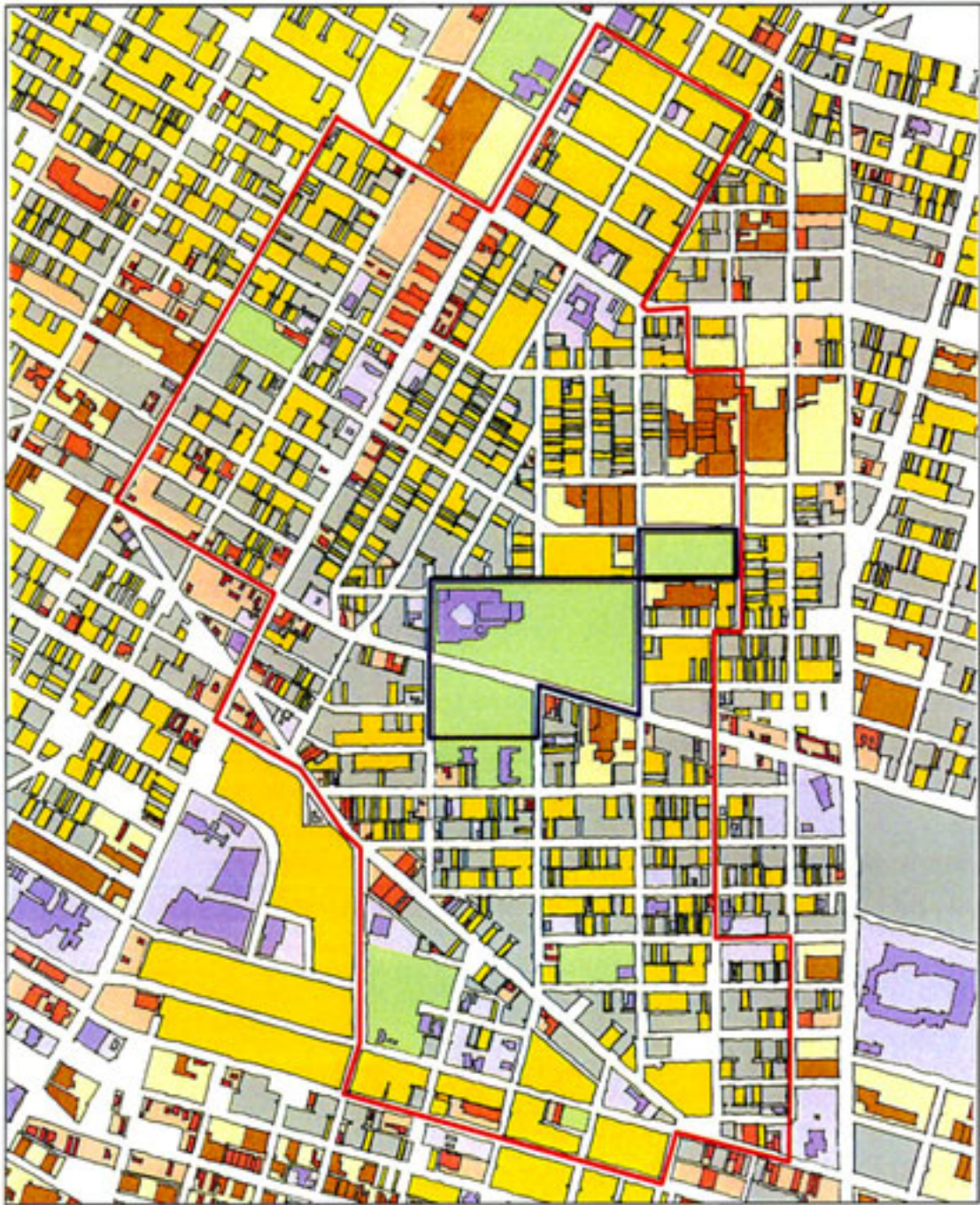


Vacancy X-Ray

Large numbers of vacant properties and buildings are found throughout the neighborhood, with high concentrations along Dr. Martin Luther King and northwest of the new Vashon High School.

Key

- Vacant Property
- JeffVanderLou Study Area
- Vashon High School Site

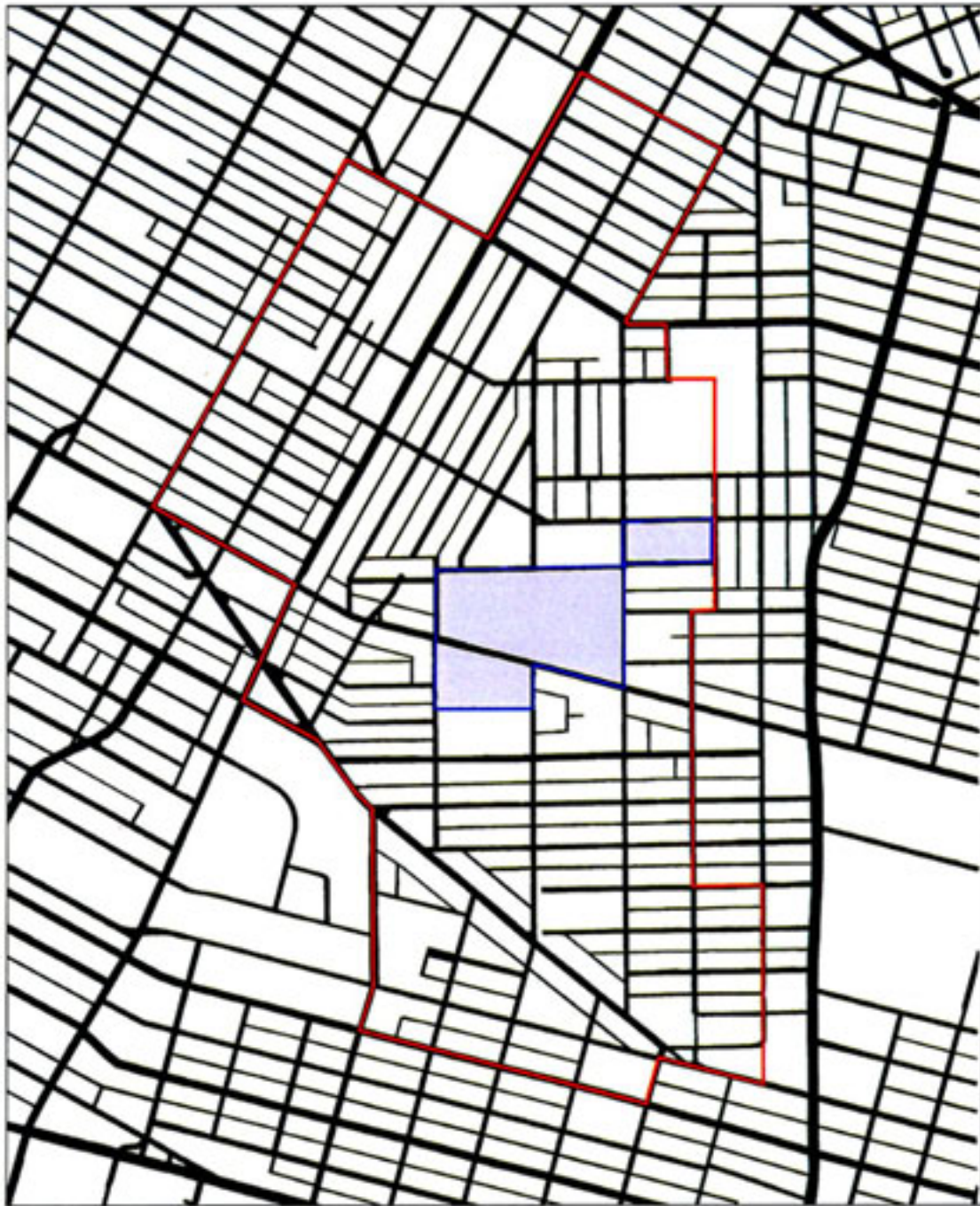


Portrait

Patterns of land use within the JeffVanderLou neighborhood are difficult to find, largely because of the abundance of vacant land. A lack of park space and solid residential blocks is also evident.

Key

- Institutional Building/Property
- Commercial Building/Property
- Industrial Building/Property
- Park
- Residential Property
- Vacant
- JeffVanderLou Study Area
- Vashon High School Site

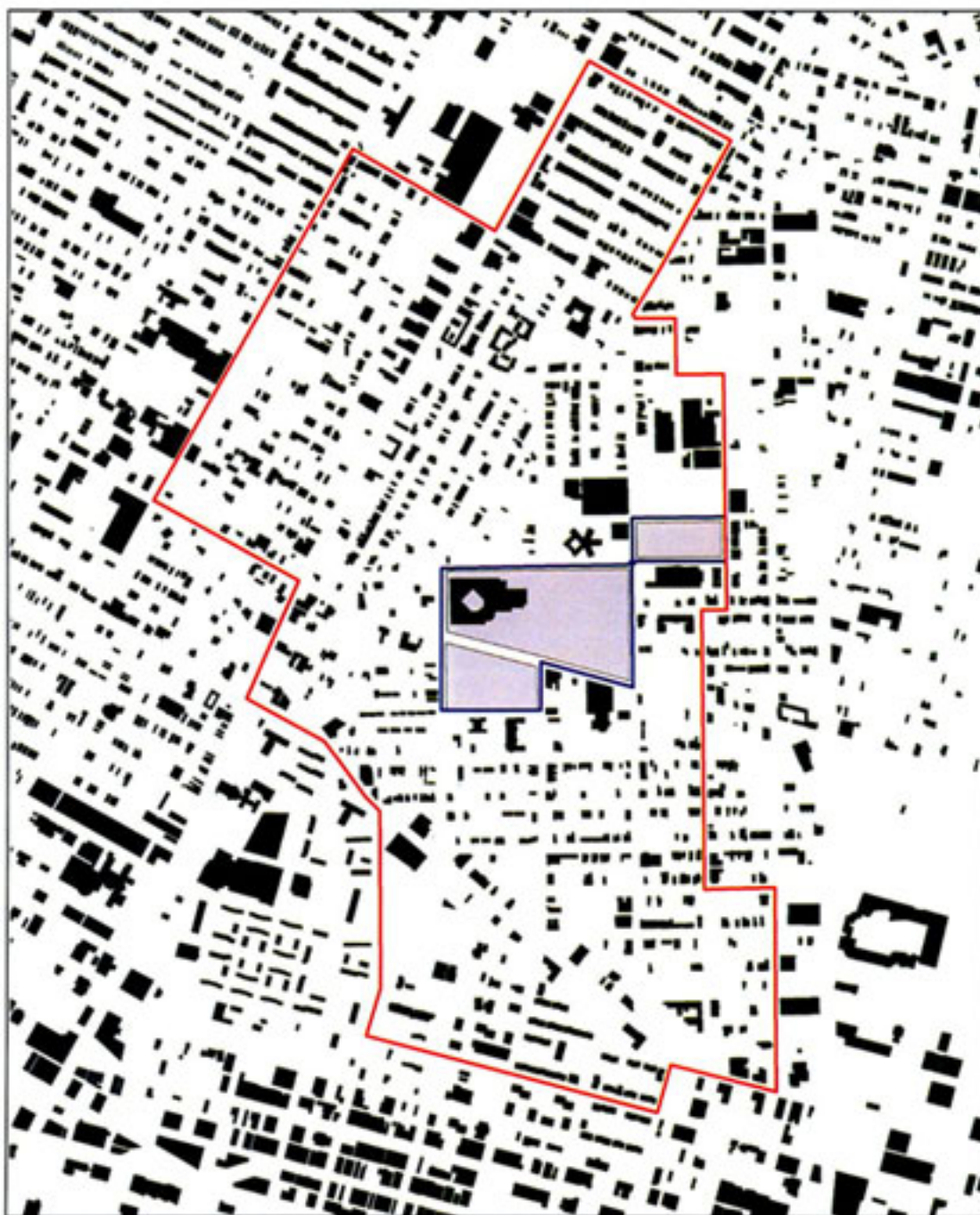


Streets X-Ray

The Streets X-Ray at the neighborhood scale shows the collision of the surrounding grids at the study area and the disruption of the typical St. Louis block structure by institutional super-blocks. The street and block patterns throughout the study area are inconsistent with the surrounding blocks, especially at Cass Avenue, which disrupts its underlying grid, and at Dr. Martin Luther King Dr., which joins together two different grids.

Key

- JeffVanderLou Study Area
- Vashon High School Site



Building Patterns X-Ray

This figure/ground drawing illustrates the commercial and industrial scale of the development south of the site, and shows the patterns of dense, stable residential neighborhoods to the northwest and in the northern part of the study area. Industrial uses within the study area are out of scale with the smaller residential buildings, and there are many vacant lots throughout the area, the greatest concentrations of which are located along Dr. Martin Luther King Drive and immediately northwest of the school site.

Key






- JeffVanderLou Study Area
- Vashon High School Site



Land Use X-Ray

The Land Use X-Ray shows the types of uses found in and around the JeffVanderLou study area. The abundance of vacant lots, shown in grey, contrasts strongly with the large number of stable institutions, such as churches and schools, that are found in the JeffVanderLou neighborhood.

Key

-  Vashon HS Site
-  JVL Study Area
-  Institution or Commercial
-  Residential
-  Vacant



Occupancy X-Ray

The occupancy X-Ray was completed using the results of the neighborhood windshield survey. This drawing more accurately identifies the vacant lots and buildings within the JeffVanderLou study area.

Key

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Vashon HS Site | Commercial: Occupied |
| JVL Study Area | Residential: Occupied |
| Institution or Park: | Commercial or Residential |
| Institution or Park: | Vacant Building: Vacant |

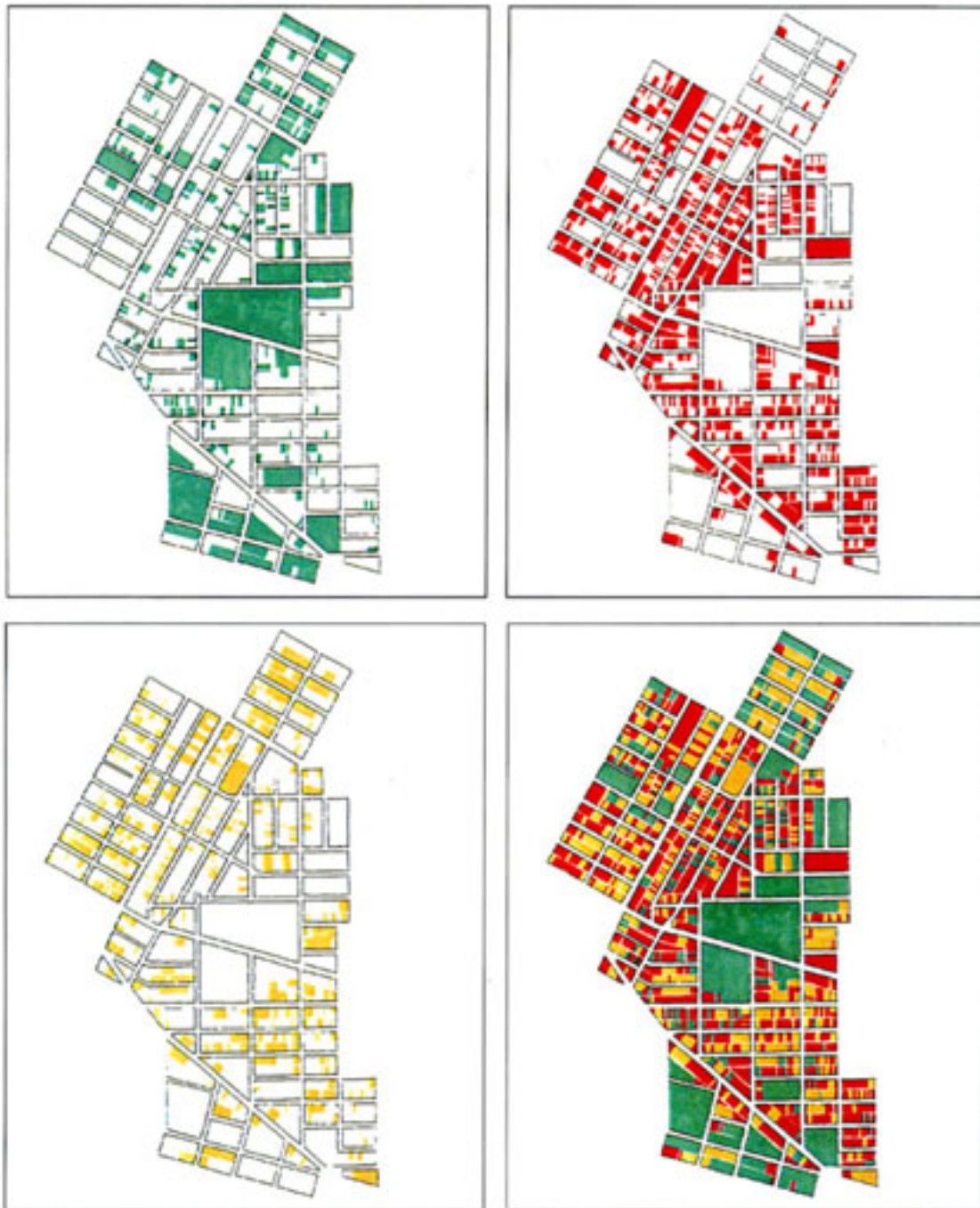


Condition X-Ray

The Condition X-Ray was also completed using the results of the neighborhood windshield survey. The expansive amount of gray illustrates the vacant and derelict properties found throughout the study area, while the green lots indicate more stable properties.

Key

Vashon HS Site	Residential: P
JVL Study Area	Residential: I
Institution or Par	Commercial: Gc
Institution or Par	Commercial: Fc
Institution or Park	Commercial: Pc
Residential: Good	Vacant



Strengths & Weaknesses X-Rays

The Strengths & Weaknesses X-Ray series is the diagrammatic result of residents' input obtained during the walking tour on March 4, 2000. The areas rendered in green represent strengths upon which the planning effort should build, such as the new Vashon High School, neighborhood churches, and owner-occupied houses. Red areas represent opportunities for new development, such as vacant land, nuisance buildings, and buildings in poor condition. Yellow areas represent neutral or transitional properties, such as rental housing that could be rehabilitated to become a neighborhood asset or redeveloped for a new use.

Key

- Strong Properties
- Weak Properties
- Neutral/Transitional Properties

St. Louis, Missouri

Vashon/JeffVanderLou Initiative Design Team Report

Prepared by URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES

Prepared for
The JeffVanderLou Neighborhood
October 2000

Acknowledgements

Prepared for the JeffVanderLou Neighborhood

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Appendix B: Street Improvements

Appendix C: Cost Estimates

Introduction

THE VASHON/JEFFVANDERLOU INITIATIVE is a comprehensive planning process to revitalize the neighborhood around the new \$40 million Vashon High School. Aside from the physical plan, the initiative includes all of the elements needed to create a healthy, vibrant, sustainable neighborhood: education improvements, social services, job training initiatives, economic development and investment opportunities.

In order to accomplish this, the initiative has been organized into four subcommittees: Education, Health and Human Services, Economic Development, and Housing and Infrastructure. Each subcommittee is made up of neighborhood leaders, technical consultants and, most importantly, people who live and work in the JeffVanderLou neighborhood. The Initiative subcommittees were responsible for guiding the design team toward a physical plan for revitalization.

The design team, made up of Urban Design Associates, David Mason and Associates, Michael Willis Architects, LaQuatra Bonci Associates, and Glatting Jackson, developed the physical plan through a three phase process. The first phase involved documenting, analyzing, and understanding the existing conditions and historical structure of the neighborhood. During the second phase, the subcommittees and design team explored design alternatives in two major design workshops, one focusing on the overall layout of streets and parks and the other on specific design concepts. In phase three, the design team completed the neighborhood Master Plan and Design Team Report.

The Design Team Report is organized into three major sections. The first section describes the design process and existing conditions analysis. The second section describes specific design initiatives. The final section is made up of a number of technical appendices that provide detailed guidelines on residential development and street design.



The Planning Process

Resident participation in the design process is vital to the success of the plan.

Design Process



I Existing Conditions Analysis

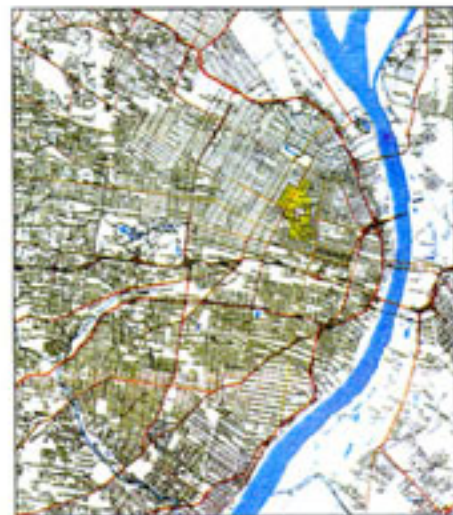
THE FIRST STEP of the design process is the preparation of a set of analysis drawings. Each drawing, or X-Ray, focuses on one or two key pieces of information, such as residential settlement patterns or vacant lots and buildings, enabling the subcommittees and design team to make informed decisions during the design process.

The base maps for the existing conditions drawings were gathered from various sources and verified through a windshield survey conducted by David Mason and Associates. Additional information was gathered at the walking tour on March 4, during which groups of residents and design team members photographed and documented the neighborhood.

The analysis drawings were drawn at three scales: the city, the district, and the neighborhood. At the city scale, elements such as streets and highways, topography, adjacent planning strategies, and funding programs were studied. At the district scale analysis of land use and building footprints identified patterns that reach beyond the study area, helping the design team to create a plan that stitches the neighborhood back into its surroundings. Finally, the neighborhood drawings focused on the details of the study area, including street patterns, land use, building patterns, and condition and occupancy, so that the subcommittees and the design team could identify problem areas as well as strengths and opportunities. The existing conditions analysis is summarized in the *Existing Conditions Report* (February 2000).

Analysis Drawings

Highways & Arterials X-Ray at the city scale (left), Street Grids X-Ray at the district scale (center), and Streets X-Ray at the neighborhood scale (right).



Key Observations

Through the analysis of the existing conditions of the neighborhood, the design team made some key observations that helped to guide the planning process. First, the neighborhood possesses many important resources that will benefit the Initiative. These include the community's long-term residents and landmark buildings, including churches, schools and historic homes, all of which provide a strong framework for a successful neighborhood plan. Second, large areas of vacant land and abandoned buildings provide opportunities to address the need for parks and recreation facilities. Third, many of the streets within the neighborhood were built for higher traffic volumes which no longer apply. This, along with some awkward street patterns and block configurations, creates the need for street improvements. Fourth, the new Vashon High School grounds should provide a park focus for the entire neighborhood. Finally, key intersections such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Grand Boulevard, are currently disorganized and surrounded by vacant buildings, but provide the opportunity to serve as entrances to the neighborhood.

Following the existing conditions analysis, the Housing and Infrastructure Subcommittee helped to generate a set of design principles, which the design team used as a checklist during the charrette process.

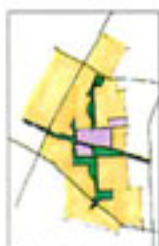
Design Principles

- 1 Build on the opportunity created by the Vashon High School construction to stimulate neighborhood revitalization in the areas of housing, education, human services, and economic development.
- 2 Rebuild a stable, affordable, mixed-income neighborhood that is dignified and inspirational.
- 3 Build houses that are consistent with the historic neighborhood character and possess no visible differences between subsidized and market-rate homes.
- 4 Build/revitalize neighborhood retail and economic development opportunities at key intersections that are consistent with the neighborhood's historic character and attractive to new markets.
- 5 Build on and connect to existing neighborhood strengths while repairing problems and coordinating with adjacent neighborhood planning efforts.
- 6 Establish an appropriate relationship between industrial, commercial, and residential uses.
- 7 Create beautiful parks, public spaces, and streets that provide ample settings for community life and neighborhood pride.
- 8 Revitalize and beautify major public streets such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

II The Evolution of the Master Plan



Central Park Plan



Linear Parks Plan



Hybrid Plan

THE FIRST DESIGN WORKSHOP took place at True Light Missionary Baptist Church on March 14-16, 2000. The charrette focused on the development of a streets, parks, and open space plan as a way of organizing the neighborhood and providing a strong basis for more specific initiatives. Working with the neighborhood subcommittees, two design alternatives emerged: the Central Park scheme and the Linear Parks scheme. The Central Park scheme created a large public park that wrapped around the new Vashon High School, providing neighborhood recreational facilities and a true center for the community. The plan included designs for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Grand Boulevard, and residential rehabilitation and infill. The Linear Parks plan also used public open space as the organizing element for the neighborhood, but in the form of linear parks. Green spaces along Garrison Avenue linked the new high school with the Columbia School in the north and Norman Seay Park in the south, while linear parks along Cass Avenue connected the school to Jefferson Avenue in the east and Grand Boulevard in the west (see the *March Design Workshop Report*).

During focus groups, residents, business owners, and other stakeholders discussed both of the plans. The Central Park

Master Plan Evolution

The Central Park scheme (left), and the Linear Parks scheme (right).

Key

- Institutional
- Park
- New Residential
- Existing Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Industrial



scheme was seen as a bold move, and an opportunity to change the image of the whole neighborhood. However, the large size of the park and the infrastructure changes raised concerns about cost and the extent of land acquisition required. Safety concerns were raised by both children and adults that the large interior park space would be indefensible. The residents liked the way the Linear Parks scheme linked the institutions and reached out to the residential areas, making park space accessible to all the residents. However, they questioned whether the Linear Park design was strong

enough to change the image of the neighborhood. After carefully considering all of the options, the residents concluded that the best elements of both schemes should be combined into a "Hybrid Plan" (see below).

The Hybrid Plan retained a centralized park, though smaller, bordered by a new curving street connecting Sheridan Avenue and Coleman Street. It also contained a number of small, linear green spaces connected by landscaped streets that reached into the neighborhood from the Vashon High School, joining institutions and residential development areas.

The Hybrid Plan

A combination of the strengths of the Central Park and Linear Parks schemes.

Key

- Institutional
- Park
- New Residential
- Existing Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Industrial



III The Master Plan



THE SECOND DESIGN WORKSHOP took place at True Light Missionary Baptist Church on May 16-18, 2000. The purpose of the second charrette was to finalize the overall neighborhood framework plan and to focus on a number of detailed design ideas. At the beginning of the workshop, the residents approved the Hybrid Plan; however, concerns about the cost of infrastructure changes led the group to consider altering the plan to make it more flexible. The more flexible "Master Plan," which calls for a smaller park surrounding the Vashon High School, was developed during the first day of the workshop with feedback from the residents and stakeholders. It provides opportunities for changes and improvements of different scales and costs, allowing the neighborhood to prioritize and implement the initiatives over time; it can be seen as a "shopping list" of neighborhood improvements.

The second charrette also focused on the design of specific initiative areas at a more detailed scale. Working with residents, the initiative areas were developed with options of higher and lower infrastructure costs, which allow the implementation of the same idea at different levels of investment. In this way, the community may proceed with initiatives even if funding for the full amount of infrastructure is not yet available.

Aerial View

The master plan shown from the West.

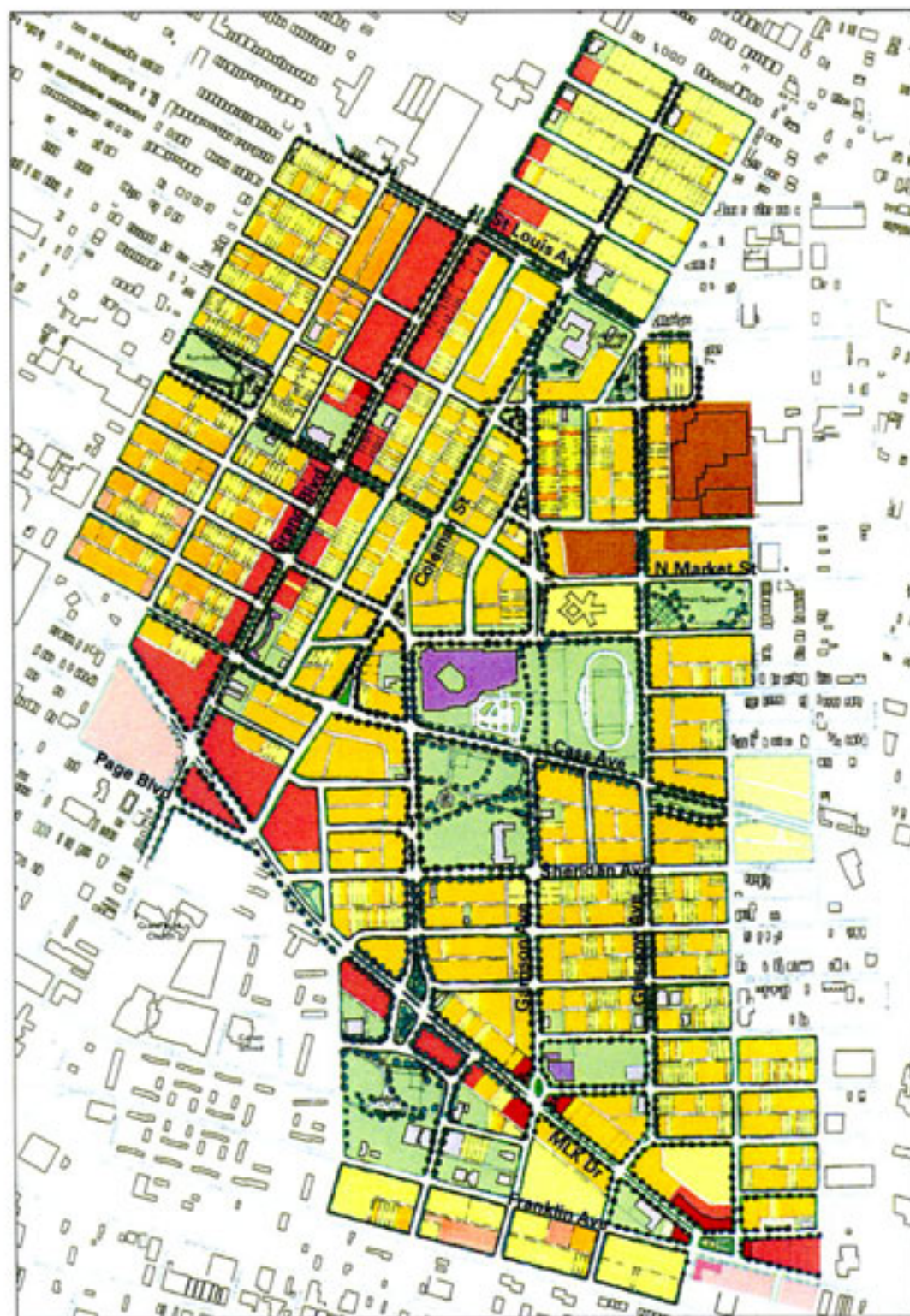


The Master Plan

The master plan is organized by a framework of streets and open spaces, and contains a "shopping list" of design initiatives which can be prioritized and implemented over time.

Key

	Institutional
	Park
	New Residential
	Existing Residential
	Commercial
	Mixed Use
	Industrial



Frameworks: Streets and Open Space

The streets and open space frameworks plan illustrates how the Master Plan provides a comprehensive system of connections by enhancing the existing infrastructure. This system of connections links neighborhood destinations such as schools, churches, and public parks into an identifiable network to help give the neighborhood a new, unified image. At the center is a major green -

space comprised of the Vashon High School site, Yaetman Square and Garrison/Brantner/Webster Park. The plan links the neighborhood amenities to the high school by well designed streets with pedestrian-scaled lighting, properly sized sidewalks, and street trees (see Appendix B). North-south streets such as Garrison can play a key role in the system by incorporating bike lanes into the road.



Frameworks

Conceptual diagram indicating how parks, indicated in green, are connected by landscaped streets to help unify the neighborhood.

Initiatives



I Residential Development Areas



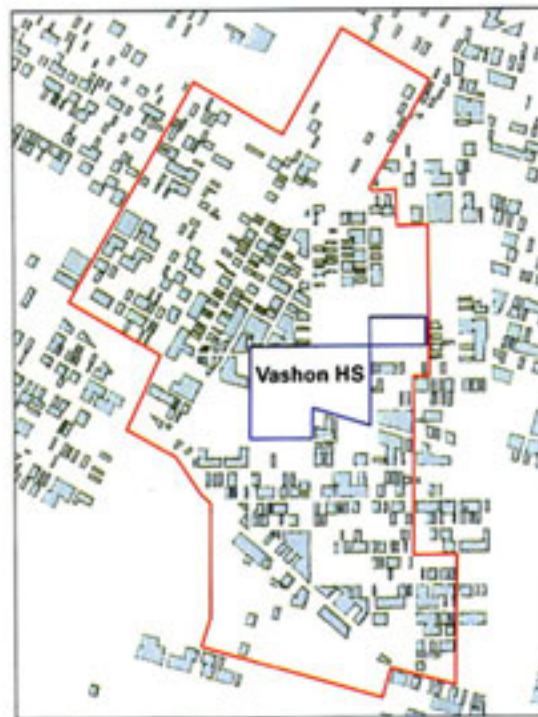
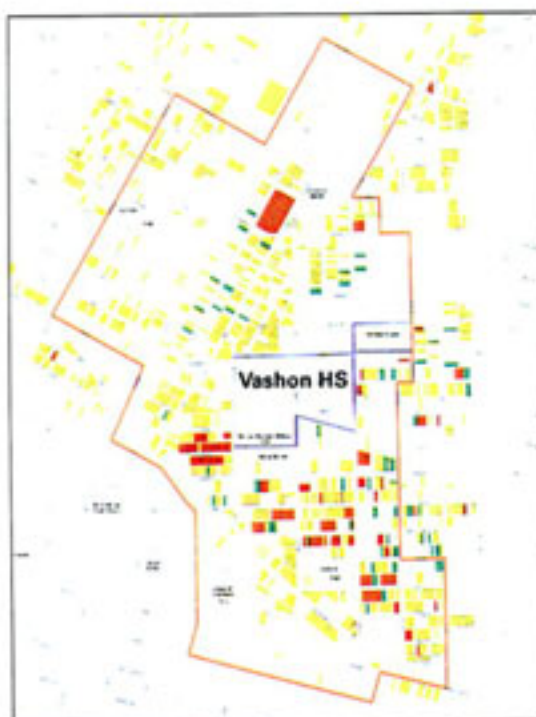
THE SUCCESS OF A NEIGHBORHOOD revitalization plan requires supporting existing homeowners and developing new affordable and attractive houses. The first initiative for the JeffVanderLou neighborhood, therefore, focuses on residential infill and revitalization. The neighborhood contains a great deal of vacant land which creates many opportunities for residential development. Housing opportunities fall into three categories: JVL/HUD housing units*, properties owned by LRA, and vacant land and buildings. The extent of available land is illustrated in the diagrams below. The plan calls for residential infill throughout the neighborhood but focuses on two specific areas as prototypical infill areas: northwest of the Vashon High School, and south of Cass Avenue. Large numbers of vacant lots northwest of Vashon provide a good setting for new house construction, just like the area west of Grand Boulevard, where a new housing development has built affordable for-sale and rental single-family homes. The high concentration of JVL/HUD and LRA properties south of Cass Avenue combined with the number of historic buildings still in good condition present an ideal area for infill housing and rehabilitation.

11

*The properties known as JVL housing, several hundred units of scattered site rental housing, are owned by private, non-profit entities and by HUD. As of June 2000, HUD was prepared to sell the units they own to a non-profit owner/manager.

Key

- LRA Properties
- JVL/HUD 15 & 18
- JVL/HUD Other
- Vacant





Residential infill Northwest of Vashon High School

During the charrette, residents identified the mostly vacant area northwest of the high school as the best place to begin a comprehensive single family residential infill initiative. A large number of new houses constructed at the same time will create a critical mass of new development and send a clear message that revitalization has begun. In order to ensure that new construction fits in with the neighborhood character, the design team developed residential design guidelines (see Appendix A).

Two alternatives for residential infill are shown below. The scheme which keeps infrastructure costs to a minimum (below right) maintains the existing street patterns. Vashon High School is

connected to the Columbia School using medians and small parks on vacant lots.

A wide, heavily landscaped planting strip on Magazine Street could provide a buffer between the high school and the houses fronting it.

The second, more elaborate alternative (below left) could include a linear park connecting the institutions, creating new curving streets as an address for residential infill. A curve in Magazine Street could provide more green space for the school. Both schemes would involve streetscaping improvements (see Appendix B) and residential infill.

West of Grand Boulevard, the residential development would follow guidelines that would allow the infill housing to blend with existing buildings, creating attractive streetscapes.

Infill Opportunities

Residential infill surrounding new linear parks at minimal infrastructure cost (far right) and higher cost with more park space (near right).

Key

- Institutional
- Park
- New Residential
- Existing Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Industrial



Infill Housing

Coleman Street, looking south toward North Market Street, before (below) and after (right) residential infill development and street improvements.





Infill Housing South of Cass Avenue

The area between Cass Avenue and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive is one of the oldest African-American neighborhoods in St. Louis. There is less vacant land in this area than northwest of the High School, therefore, the residential strategy calls for a creative mix of new infill construction and rehabilitation of existing structures. The emphasis should be on restoring complete blocks. Residents felt that both new construction and rehabilitation should follow the design guidelines for elements such as

setbacks and alley access (see Appendix A) to ensure that new homes blend with existing streetscapes.

Because most of the streets in this area already have a strong architectural character, it is important that any new infill construction and rehabilitation complement the character of the existing buildings, matching such elements as setbacks, massing, roof pitch and window and door proportions. As in any stable residential neighborhood, residents felt strongly that there should be a mix of housing types at a variety of price levels.



Infill South of Cass Avenue

Plan illustrating how infill houses would blend with existing houses by following neighborhood design guidelines such as lot size and setbacks.

Key

- Institutional
- Park
- New Residential
- Existing Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Industrial

This area also contains a large number of JVL/HUD housing units, some of which are already being renovated by JVL Renaissance, Inc., a non-profit company. Further renovation of these properties, where feasible, should include efforts to reconfigure units into single family layouts, with secure yards and street-facing entrances. The units should also be designed to fit in with the historic character of the neighborhood (see Appendix A).

Public investment including improved streets, sidewalks, lighting, street trees and a revitalized Norman Seay Park will help to attract public and private investment in this part of the neighborhood. The emphasis should be on creating whole revitalized blocks with new and rehabilitated houses, improved streetscaping, and traffic calming, all working together to create a strong neighborhood identity.

Historic Infill and Rehabilitation

Dayton Street at Seay Park looking east before (right) and after new residential development designed to fit in with the neighborhood's historic houses (below).



II Thematic Historic and Cultural District



THE VASHON/JEFFVANDERLOU INITIATIVE worked with the architect and cultural historian Everett Fly to create guidelines for the implementation of a Thematic Historic District in the area south of Cass Avenue and east of Grand Boulevard. In the past this was one of the few areas in St. Louis where African-Americans were permitted to buy property and, therefore, has a great deal of historical significance.

Having the area placed on the National Register of Historic Places as a Thematic Historic District has several advantages. First, it recognizes and celebrates the historic significance of the area to the St. Louis African-American Community. Second, it can help to raise funds to restore historically or culturally significant buildings. Third, it can help to provide funding for new construction of homes, businesses and public buildings that are compatible with the area's historic image. Fourth, it creates economic development based on tourism. Finally, it can help to raise funds for infrastructure improvements such as historic trails and bikeways. The designation could also attract private investment.

Thematic Historic District

Detailed plan showing the Thematic Historic District area south of Cass Avenue, around Norman Seay Park.

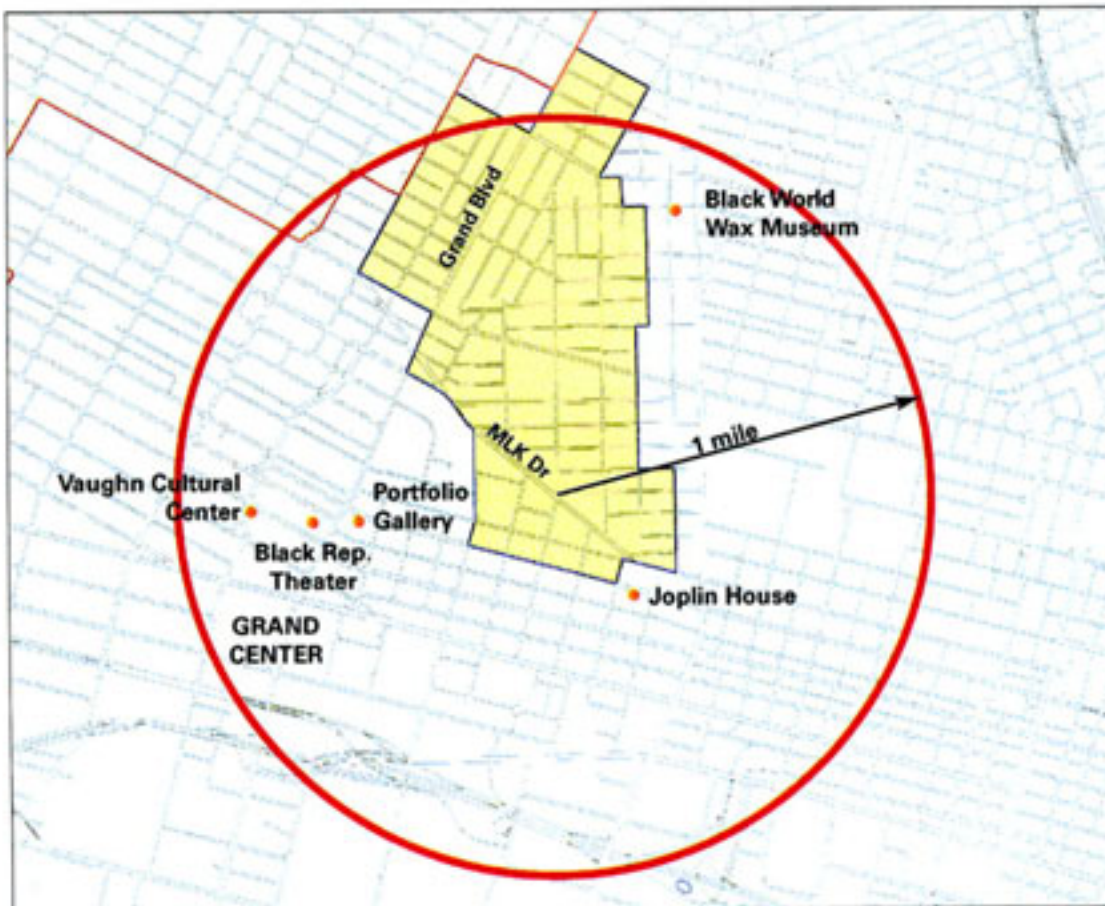
Key

- Institutional
- Park
- New Residential
- Existing Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Industrial



Part of the Thematic Historic District study includes an effort to create a Cultural Arts District centered on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The map below shows that within a one mile radius of the intersection of MLK Drive and Garrison Avenue there are a number of existing cultural institutions including: The Scott Joplin House (2658 Delmar Blvd), The Black World History Wax Museum (2505 St. Louis Ave), the St. Louis Black Repertory Company (634 N. Grand Blvd), the Unity Theater Ensemble (2240 St. Louis Ave), the Vaughn Cultural Center (3701 Grandel

Square), and the Portfolio Gallery (3514 Delmar Blvd). There is also an effort underway to construct a new African American Museum within the Cultural Arts District. The formation of a Cultural Arts District will allow these institutions to coordinate their marketing and special promotion efforts, and to attract tourists - local and national - to the area as it begins to revitalize. It will also create an opportunity to form a partnership with the Grand Center Arts District to add diversity to its vision and to its events.



Cultural District

Map showing cultural attractions within a one mile radius, centered on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive at Sooy Park.

III Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive



DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DRIVE, the historic heart of the community, once served as a thriving commercial thoroughfare. Throughout the planning process residents stressed the importance of revitalizing this corridor to create a strong address for new development. Initiatives proposed for MLK Drive include the revitalization of the "Wedge" at the intersection of Franklin Avenue and the area around Norman Seay Park at Garrison. Potential uses include commercial and institutional developments such as a job training center, a youth arts center, and a cultural center or museum.

The Master Plan calls for the Wedge to be revitalized as an entrance to the JeffVanderLou neighborhood with retail uses, a public square, and a new "Triangle of Respect" commemorating the Wall of Respect that once stood there. One popular request of the neighborhood's long time residents was that the area feature a new soda fountain modeled after the Frye's drug store that was a neighborhood favorite in the 1940's and 50's.

Because Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive runs at an angle, there is an opportunity for small green spaces at the intersections to help reconcile the street geometry and create attractive addresses for new development. Streetscaping along the length of MLK Drive, including street trees, lighting, and a median, will create a more pleasant pedestrian environment.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Plan

Revitalized commercial, mixed-use, and institutional development is concentrated around small parks.

Key

- Institutional
- Park
- New Residential
- Existing Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Industrial





Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive

Eye-level views at the "Wedge" before and after, facing northwest with Frye's drug store on the right (above left), and looking southeast with new seniors housing on the left (below left).

iv Grand Boulevard



GRAND BOULEVARD WAS ONCE a major commercial corridor in North St. Louis, particularly when Sportsmen's Park, the major league baseball stadium, was located at Grand Boulevard and Dodier Street. Much of its commercial character remains, but many of the businesses are struggling. The revitalization of Grand Boulevard will help to reconnect the JeffVanderLou neighborhood to surrounding communities such as the Grand Center Arts District. The Master Plan focuses on three initiatives along Grand Boulevard: the intersection with St. Louis Avenue, the intersection with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, and streetscape improvements along in between.

The intersection at St. Louis Avenue and Grand Boulevard was identified by the Economic Development Subcommittee as the most promising commercial area in the neighborhood because of its location at an important cross-roads. There are currently a number of businesses located at this intersection and business prospects and opportunities will continue to improve as the neighborhood is revitalized. The plan calls for improved streetscaping, on-street and off-street parking, and improvements to building facades.



Grand Boulevard and St. Louis Avenue as it exists today (above) and with commercial revitalization and streetscape improvements (right).

The intersection of Grand Boulevard and MLK Drive is a major gateway to the JeffVanderLou community. The plan proposes an improved intersection, to serve as a monumental entrance to the neighborhood and provide convenient access into large-scale commercial developments proposed by the city.

A proposed Bi-State Development Agency bus transfer station at Grand and Cass Avenue will provide residents with access to jobs throughout the region

while stimulating commercial development within the neighborhood. The bus station's close proximity to the new Vashon High School also allows convenient access for students, many of whom use the Bi-State system.

The Grand Boulevard initiative involves streetscaping improvements, which create a pedestrian-friendly environment that will encourage business development. The width and character of Grand Boulevard changes as it progresses

21



Grand Boulevard Plan

Revitalized commercial development is supported by three major initiatives: the intersection at St. Louis Avenue, streetscape improvements, and the intersection at MLK Drive.

Key

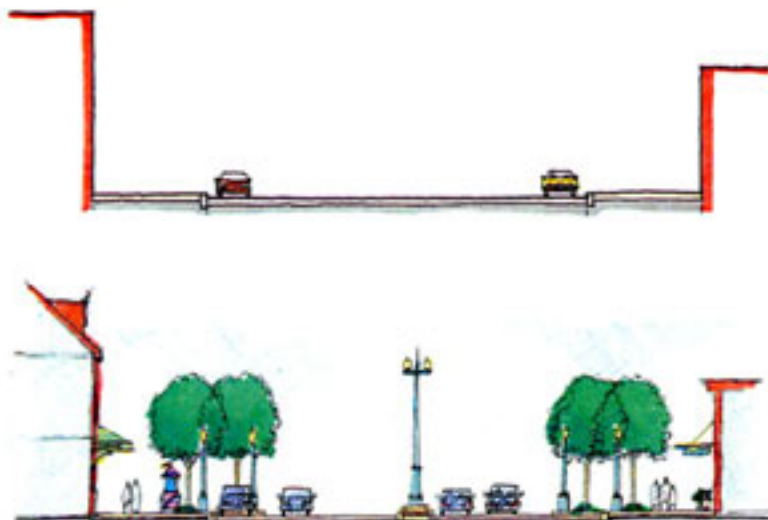
- Institutional
- Park
- New Residential
- Existing Residential
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- Mixed Use
- Industrial

north through the neighborhood, requiring different treatments. Around the intersections of MLK Drive and St. Louis Avenue, the right of way width is conducive to four lanes of traffic and parallel parking on both sides. Between these areas, however, a wider right of way

allows for a median, and large commercial development with parking areas directly adjacent to the buildings. The entire length of Grand Boulevard would receive similar pedestrian-scale lighting, street trees, and improved pedestrian crossings.

Street Sections

Grand Boulevard before (bottom) and after (top), showing typical streetscaping improvements between Cass and St. Louis Avenues.



v The Eastern Edge



The residential/ industrial connection

*Plan showing a buffer
between industrial and
residential uses in the
eastern portion of the
neighborhood.*

Key

- Institutional
- Park
- New Residential
- Existing Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Industrial



LAND USE PLANNING is vital to the creation of a coherent neighborhood plan. The JeffVanderLou Master Plan illustrates the commercial uses along the neighborhood's historically commercial corridors, Grand Boulevard and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, within walking distance from the residential areas. Resolving the relationship of the predominantly residential neighborhood with industrial uses, however, is more complicated. Designing a plan for the industrial eastern edge of the neighborhood requires collaboration with the 5th Ward. Through combined planning efforts, a business address along Jefferson Avenue can exist while ensuring the stability of residential uses immediately east of the Vashon High School. As it is best to have like uses facing each other across a street and to make land use transitions along alleys, residential lots that back up to industrial development can create a residential buffer for the industrial corridor.



The Eastern Edge
The JeffVanderLou Master Plan coordinates with land use plans of neighboring communities.

Key

- Institutional
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- Existing Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Industrial